



Soham Town Council
PO Box 21
The Walter Gidney Pavilion
Fountain Lane
Soham
Cambridgeshire CB7 9PL

Tel: 01353 723472
Email: info@soham-tc.gov.uk
Web: www.soham-tc.gov.uk

SOHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Soham Town Council meeting held at the Walter Gidney Pavilion,
Fountain Lane recreation ground, Soham on Monday 26th September 2022.

Present: Cllrs E Johnston, D Woricker, R Aitchison, G Dyer, K Horgan, A Jones, P Lane, P Leonard, A Pallett and H Ross.
M Strand, Town Clerk and M Francis, Assistant Town Clerk

In attendance: District Cllr A Jones.
There were 14 members of the public present.

The meeting was opened at 7:15pm.

117/22. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr C Warner (personal). Cllr G Woodbridge (work commitments).

118/22 COUNCILLOR'S DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Cllrs E Johnston and K Horgan declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 123/22 (c.) – Chapel update (contractor known to them). Cllr P Leonard declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 127/22 (m.) – High Street planters (lives adjacent to the area).

There were no requests for dispensations for disclosable pecuniary interests.

119/22. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS & TOWN CLLR UPDATES

- a. The Chairman asked those present to observe a minute's silence to reflect on the passing of Mr Christopher Palmer and Mrs Anne Lane, former Councillors, and HM The Queen.
- b. NOTED – Molly Evershed – thanks received from niece & family.
- c. This Land Ltd – Cllr Ross said that This Land had held a public consultation on the Eastern Gateway on 31st August. It transpires that This Land is not contributing financially to building the new medical centre but only giving land for it to be built on. Cllr Ross would like to propose votes of no confidence in CCC and ECDC regarding financial discrepancies and the planning application process regarding the proposed development.
- d. Ely Manor – Cllr Johnston had contacted Morar UK to ask if the name of their new care home at The Shade could reflect the history of the area. Following further consultation, the home will now be named Townsend Manor. The launch of the care home will take place on

27th October at 2pm and all Councillors and residents are invited to attend.

120/22. PUBLIC COMMENT TIME

Two residents spoke about their concerns over the cancellation of bus services by Stagecoach, which will impact greatly on those who rely on the service to take them to Ely or Newmarket to make use of the amenities there. It was also reported that the Combined Authority for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had put forward funding for bus services to continue until March 2023, although it is not yet clear whether this includes the no. 12 and no. 11 services that affect Soham residents.

Three residents spoke about the proposed Eastern Gateway development and raised the following points: -

- Who will pay to build the new medical centre and associated infrastructure, and, with the current shortage of NHS workers, will they be able to recruit enough staff to run the centre?
- The developer has set aside 15 acres of open spaces, but this is inadequate in comparison to what is currently there. The development will have a detrimental affect on wildlife and all those who currently use the area for walking.
- A recent survey showed that 95% of residents were against the Eastern Gateway development as proposed.
- Why does the development include provision for shops when residents should be encouraged to support the town centre?
- A recent consultation by This Land was held at a time which would not have been convenient for most people.

Concerns were also raised over the way the planning application has been dealt with by ECDC's Planning Committee, and with regard to financial irregularities with the developer, This Land.

In relation to the proposal to place planters outside the Co-op and Post Office to prevent illegal parking on the pavement, a resident asked that, if this was approved, other measures could also be looked at to alleviate parking issues on the opposite side of the road.

A resident asked the Council to change its rules to allow members of the public to speak for more than 3 minutes each at its meetings.

All comments were NOTED.

121/22. COUNTY & DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Apologies had been received from County Cllr Mark Goldsack.

NOTED – written report from District Cllr Jones. At the meeting, Cllr Jones reported the following: -

- Bus services – consultation with other contractors should start at the beginning of October so that contracts can be drawn up to replace bus services which will be funded by the Combined Authority in the short term.

122/22. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. APPROVED unanimously - the minutes of the Full Council Meeting held 11th July 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
- b. NOTED - matters arising including Clerk's Report.
- c. APPROVED unanimously - the minutes from the Planning Committee Meeting held on 22nd August 2022 were approved as a true record.

Cllr Pallett reported the following and asked that it be recorded in the minutes: -

Cllrs Pallett and Warner were present and spoke at the ECDC Planning Committee meeting on behalf of STC on Wednesday 7th September regarding the planning application at Downfield Farm, Fordham Road for 210 dwellings. STC has several concerns regarding drainage and surface water, and that the building works could potentially have an adverse effect on the Aquifer at this location. The site is outside the development envelope which goes against the Local Plan 2015. Although the design is one of the better ones, the single access would contribute to the already congested Fordham Road. The proposed community hall was not advantageous and not accessible to all Soham residents who will be responsible for its upkeep through the Council Tax. ECDC Planning Committee voted for approval.

The Local Highways Initiative funding for double yellow lines at Cyprian Rust Way and Townsend – this will be carried out in 2023.

123/22. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CURRENT & WHERE NECESSARY PREVIOUS FULL COUNCIL MINUTES:

- a. NOTED - Neighbourhood Plan (Working Group) (Cllr Aitchison). The grant application had been agreed and the funds received. This will enable the consultant to continue with work on the Neighbourhood Plan up to referendum stage. It is hoped this will take place in May next year alongside the local elections. Once the Plan has been submitted to ECDC and approved by them, it becomes part of the planning process even before a referendum has been undertaken.
- b. NOTED - Byway 113 (Soham – Wicken Cycleway) (Cllr Woricker) a grant funding application is in progress with ECDC for match-funding the grant of £330,000 from the Combined Authority which had been approved. Design plans have been drawn up and quotations are being obtained. More information will be circulated when it becomes available.
- c. NOTED - Chapel Update (Cllr Johnston). One quotation had been received for repair work on the south chapel which will be considered at the October meeting. Further quotations will be obtained if possible.

124/22. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

- a. To note reports from any Working Groups (any decisions to be made are listed separately on the agenda) – there had been no Working Group meetings since the last Full Council meeting.

125/22 FINANCE MATTERS

- a. APPROVED unanimously Receipts & Payments 5 July – 5 August & 6 August – 5 September 2022 as listed at the end of the agenda.

- b. APPROVED unanimously Grant Application CamSight (LGA 1972, s.137) – £500.
- c. APPROVED unanimously Grant Application Relate Cambridge (LGA 1972, s.137) - £500.
- d. APPROVED unanimously quotation for repairs to Recreation Ground play equipment (Rocking Frog) – £450.00 +VAT.
- e. APPROVED replacement Mayor Chains – it was agreed to put forward designs for a medallion for the new chain and obtain quotations for its manufacture for consideration at a future meeting.

126/22

GOVERNANCE & ADMINISTRATION

- a. APPROVED unanimously – Model Standing Orders (updated 2022).

127/22

RECREATION GROUND/PAVILION/TOWN MATTERS

- a. Carbon Reduction proposals (Cllrs Aitchison & Horgan) –
 - NOTED – possible tree planting scheme (see also item (b.) below).
 - APPROVED unanimously Seen to Be Green competition for local businesses implementing carbon reduction measures with £100 prize: proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Horgan. Cllr Horgan will put together terms and conditions for the competition for future consideration and rollout in early 2023.
 - Electric charging points – proposed by Cllr Aitchison, seconded by Cllr Horgan to put together a public consultation regarding suitable sites for charging points – AGREED.
- b. NOTED - Community Payback & Queen’s Green Canopy (Cllr Horgan) – STC has been offered a free pack of 50 trees and the resources to plant them via the Community Payback Scheme. Possible sites have been identified but need further investigation. It was proposed by Cllr Horgan and seconded by Cllr Leonard to ask the Council’s Land Agent to investigate potential sites for suitability and this was APPROVED. A Zoom meeting will be arranged with the land agent. A decision on whether to accept a pack of 50 trees will be made at the October meeting.
- c. DEFERRED to October - to consider & approve CCTV Report and Proposed Rectification Works (Cllr Warner).
- d. NOTED – Soham Commons (Richard Kay ECDC Strategic Planning Manager) – a new role has been created at ECDC which will incorporate the role of ‘Soham Commons Officer’. A proposal for the Chairman and two other Councillors to meet with Richard Kay and the new officer, together with the landowner and Land Agent, was APPROVED unanimously.
- e. NOTED – Staploe Rotary Club Beer Festival – no damage had been done to the pavilion at this year’s festival following the decision to close the toilets. The Rotary Club had requested reimbursement of the cost of hiring portaloos at short notice however, it was agreed that this would not be possible as it would set a precedent for other event organisers to ask for the same. It was therefore proposed by Cllr Horgan and seconded by Cllr Leonard to ask the Rotary Club to submit a grant application for £500 towards the cost of the toilets and the proposal was APPROVED unanimously.
- f. APPROVED unanimously – Temporary Event Notices (TENS) will be applied for at a cost of £21 each for events held at the pavilion that involve the sale or consumption of alcohol: proposed Cllr Pallett,

- seconded Cllr Ross. The cost and implications of applying for a premises licence are prohibitive and unworkable.
- g. APPROVED unanimously to allow the Royal British Legion (RBL) to send out invitations to this year's Remembrance Day event under the Council's name: proposed Cllr Aitchison, seconded Cllr Horgan. It was also agreed to publicise the event through the Council's media channels emphasising that it will be held on the **morning** of Sunday 13th November.
 - h. NOTED Phase II Architect (Cllr Woricker) – quotations for drawings received. It was AGREED to consider these in closed session later in the meeting.
 - i. APPROVED – Larry Gray Funfair 2 – 9 October. This event will be dependent on the weather and may not go ahead.
 - j. APPROVED – Design of Clock donation from Pos+ability.
 - k. DEFERRED – to consider increase in Allotment rent 2023, a refundable deposit and rationalisation of water charges (Cllr Warner).
 - l. DEFERRED – to consider purchase of a topper (grass cutter) (Cllr Warner).
 - m. WITHDRAWN - to consider & approve in principle placement of planters on High Street (subject to permission from all relevant parties) – cost up to £2,000. Cllr Leonard withdrew the proposal and asked for other Councillors to undertake this project to mitigate the risks of illegal parking on the pavement. It was agreed that Cllr Woricker will bring a proposal to the next meeting. Cllr Horgan will look at putting together a strategy to deal with parking issues of on the opposite side of the road as a separate matter.

128/22

MOTION TO EXCLUDE

To resolve under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, that public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted – RESOLVED. Members of the public left the meeting.

129/22

ONGOING COMMERCIALLY SENSITIVE MATTERS

- a. NOTED – land acquisition (Cllr Johnston). This matter has been recorded in confidential minutes.
- b. Phase II architect (Item 127/22 (h.)) (Cllr Woricker). Following discussion of the two quotations received, it was proposed by Cllr Dyer and seconded by Cllr Aitchison that both quotations be accepted so that comparisons could be made between the ideas put forward. Councillors voted 5 in favour and the proposal was NOT CARRIED. It was subsequently proposed to accept the quotation from Andrew Fleet for £750.00 for two drawings (site survey not included). Councillors voted 5 in favour. The Chairman used her casting vote, and the proposal was CARRIED.

APPROVED to waive Standing Orders and continue the meeting beyond the 2-hour time limit.

130/22

MOTION TO RE-ADMIT

To resolve that the confidential business having been concluded, the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting – RESOLVED.

131/22

MATTERS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

- a. To consider and approve - A resolution to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge – it was agreed to table this as a future agenda item.
- b. To receive and consider - Option to opt out of the SAAA central external auditor appointment arrangements – the Council will not opt out of these arrangements.

132/22

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 10th October 2022, Walter Gidney Pavilion @ 7.15pm

The meeting was closed at 9:26pm.

Approved and signed 10.10.2022